

Interview with Earnest Nelson

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Interviewed by John LeDoux

LeDoux: This is John LeDoux for the Central Minnesota Historical Center. The date is April 7, 1978. Today I am interviewing the Reverend Ernest Nelson of Cambridge, Minnesota. First of all, Reverend Nelson, I'd like to ask you about your ancestors and maybe ask you to trace it back about as far as you can remember. Now, your grandparents were, come from Sweden?

Nelson: My grandparents and parents never came to this country. They were mostly agricultural people over there in Sweden and I came over here in October 1916. I never saw my grandparents, but I remember when my grandparents on my paternal side passed away. My mother's forebearers are of some interest, in a way. They belonged to the Castle relation which goes back to 1592 in Scotland and their name Castle was taken from the castle by the name Calislis, which by the way was given as an honorary gift to General Eisenhower after World War II.

LeDoux: How is that spelled?

Nelson: C-A-L, I think S-L-I-S. I left something out.

LeDoux: Yeah, that's okay. Now, this is presented to General Eisenhower?

Nelson: Well then, the Castle Clan and the Kennedy Clan were sub-clans of the Fitzgeralds. The Castle that would be a forebearer of my mother come to Stockholm, Sweden to the royal palace

to be the head stable master at the royal palace and he also head the coronation train for march for King Karl IX. I think it was in about 1604, some place in there. He came, from there on the Castle tribe split up and many of them became the elite people of Sweden and other just ordinary working folks. But the name Castle is the protective name over there as it is now I have a number of cousins who came from that tribe as well as my mother and one of the Castles came to this country in about 1845 and became the founder of Madrid, Iowa. He became a controversial character and did a lot of promoting to get other Swedes to come over. There's quite a bit written about him, especially in the Lutheran Church. He was very active for a while although later he became a Methodist, but some of his descendants are still living down in the Madrid and Ogden area. I had the privilege to meet one of them just a few months ago. So, that would take care of the background of the parents. My father was the head man of the bigger states in the province of Astergagatland.

LeDoux: Now, how is that spelled? I say this because people are going to be writing down the words from the tapes so you can read it. They wouldn't know how to spell that.

Nelson: It's Swedish of course that would be an O with two dots over it, that would be an A, so it would be Astergagaland. And I have quite a lot of relatives up in the province of Astergagland. Then later on he moved down to the province of Lindera, where I was born. There we had a number of horses and did a lot of hauling of timber and lumber from sawmills. So that's how I grew up, and on the horses and hauling timber and lumber from sawmills. So that's how I grew up, and on the horses and hauling timber on the road. We moved down to – when I was a little boy.

LeDoux: Where were you born, first of all?

Nelson: Where was I born? I was born in Linderå, March 1, 1898.

LeDoux: Okay. I think you might have to spell some of these Swedish names.

Nelson: Well, Linderå is L-I-N-D-E-R-Å. Linderå.

LeDoux: Okay.

Nelson: And then in 1901 we moved down to the town of Oasada, that's spelled O-A-S-E-D-Å and there I stayed until 1916 when I came over here. We've been back a few times to visit relatives. In fact we were home in 1932, the fall and winter. Then my father died while we were home.

LeDoux: Were most-did you help your father out on the farm most of the time when you were a young boy then?

Nelson: No. It was hauling timber, lumber.

LeDoux: Okay.

Nelson: Logging you could say. Long distance hauling. And that was all done by horses during those days. And as far as the family, we were 11 children in the family four of whom came over to this country. But I'm the only one left now of those coming over here. And I still have two sisters over in Sweden.

LeDoux: Okay. Now, this logging business you said your father was one of the head men on this operation?

Nelson: No, that was up while he was up in Åstergåland and worked on the farms.

LeDoux: Okay.

Nelson: After he started logging that was on his own.

LeDoux: Okay. So this is more or less just a family operation.

Nelson: Yes. Hauling for others, taking contracts and so on.

LeDoux: Okay. Now, you came over here in 1916?

Nelson: Yes.

LeDoux: How did you happen to decide to come over here?

Nelson: It was circumstantial in one way. The last year I was over there I worked in a machine factory, on a lathe. Before that I'd spent two years working, building a railroad other places. But as I worked in the machine shop, one night the whole factory burned down. Then we started to build a new one in town. Then, in the meanwhile, some folks had come back from America and were going back and I suppose the fever caught a few of us. We decided to come along.

LeDoux: Some people had come back intending to come back to America or they were staying in Sweden?

Nelson: They had been here a few years and had come back to visit.

LeDoux: I see.

Nelson: Then we came as a group. Over, in 1916. Of that group, I'm the only one left now. So time changes.

LeDoux: And you had three brothers and sisters, three brothers come over with you?

Nelson: We were three brothers when we came over and one sister.

LeDoux: Okay.

Nelson: And then there was one brother and six sisters over there.

LeDoux: I was talking to one gentleman who was of Greek descent and he was describing the ship journey over. How do you remember that? I assume this is the first time you had been out on the ocean.

Nelson: Well, when we left home, the eights of October, we went via Gothenberg and Oslo, Norway and up to Bergen, Norway where we took the ship Bergensford. That was during World War I. The boat was intercepted when we got into Kirkwall, Scotland to have our papers checked.

LeDoux: The English brought you in?

Nelson: What?

LeDoux: The English brought you in to have your papers checked?

Nelson: I presume it was the English. I can still remember how we travelled through the mine fields. After that we went on to America. We had a good time but it was storming and some days we were locked down. Could not go up on deck and of course, we landed in Ellis Island. I don't remember too much about that. We took the train to Chicago. Stayed there a few days, chanced to meet, we called him Uncle, although he was my father's cousin, Pastor Linden. I met him. Then I went to Iowa to meet my brother in Boone, Iowa. Worked there for a while, a short period and then returned to Chicago, again. From there on I worked a little bit, here and there.

LeDoux: Now, you had a brother already living in Iowa when you came over?

Nelson: He had come from Portland, Oregon where he did contracting and then spent a little while in Iowa doing bricklayer work.

LeDoux: When did he come over to the United States?

Nelson: He came in April 1911, with another group.

LeDoux: So you went back to Chicago from Iowa? And then you worked odd jobs around Chicago?

Nelson: Well, I worked on building, common labor. Then what that was done I got a job in a Stewart Warner factory where they made Stewart Warner speedometers. I worked there for a while, then I, out on a farm, I think.

LeDoux: This is outside of Chicago?

Nelson: I went up to Williams Bay.

LeDoux: That's up in--

Nelson: To work for a Scotsman on a farm.

LeDoux: Williams Bay. Now what state is that in?

Nelson: Wisconsin.

LeDoux: Wisconsin.

Nelson: Then I came back. That winter I worked on the fish market in Chicago, the wholesale fish market.

LeDoux: Now, what date is this, about, once you're back in Chicago?

Nelson: In the fall of '17.

LeDoux: '17, okay.

Nelson: I took the job in the fish market in the spring, I went out on a farm, again, at Wheaton, Illinois to work for a Hurly.

LeDoux: Hurly?

Nelson: Hurly, who was the head of the shipping during World War II for the U.S. shipping. He had a farm and a beautiful summer home and I worked in the garden and around the residence for him. Then in the fall of 1919 I went with a group out to Ohio to do construction work at Galion, Ohio. That was the first time I'd seen two women fight on the street. They pulled the hair out of each other. And when that job was done I went to Youngstown, Ohio to work in Carnegie Steel Mill.

LeDoux: And what's the name of the steel mill?

Nelson: Carnegie, as in U.S.

LeDoux: Oh, Carnegie, okay. This was what year then? About 1919?

Nelson: Fall of 1918 and stayed until 1920. Left the Colorado railroad strike, spent several months waiting to get back. So then I went back to Chicago again to Delewin Lake to work for a resort for the summer. In the fall of '20 I took a job as a house man for a Robert J. Thorns, a millionaire who worked, who lived in Lake Forest, Illinois along the lake shore. We were servants, and I was the houseman, a wonderful experience. And then in the late fall we moved

into Chicago to Lake Shore Drive and continued to work for a while. But I always had in mind that I wanted to go to school.

LeDoux: Excuse me. But at this stage when you came over to this country, did you know any English at all?

Nelson: No.

LeDoux: How did you start picking it up then?

Nelson: Well, I bought a dictionary, English and Swedish dictionary that I still have, and any words that I didn't know or understand, I'd look them up. When I travelled on the streetcar, I always say names I didn't know, I looked them up. I always bought a newspaper, though I couldn't read much but I always to the hang of it. Sometimes my comrades made fun of me, so they tested me to see, well, do you know what you're reading, what does it say here? I could tell them. Languages always came easy to me. And then I took the opportunity to go to night school whenever I could.

LeDoux: When did you start going, do you recall?

Nelson: What?

LeDoux: When did you start going to night school? Do you recall?

Nelson: I suppose it was around, well I couldn't quite say.

LeDoux: Sometime--

Nelson: I think it was in the '20's. '21, in the winter. Because I went to St. Paul, to Bethel Academy in the fall of '21. I had to earn my own way. I was sort of a newcomer, in this country,

I had to take a year preparatory work, alongside the regular course and my course was a seven year course that I put in eight years of work in six. So that way I got out of school, out of seminary, one year ahead of my academy class. In 1926 I married her, Myrtle and in 1927, when I graduated Myrtle, my wife, we took our first church over at Blomkest, Minnesota.

LeDoux: Okay, first of all, what is your wife's maiden name?

Nelson: Myrtle C. Nordstrom, was at that time. And she came from Carlton County, Minnesota.

LeDoux: So your first church at Baptist Church at Lindstrom--

Nelson: Blomkest.

LeDoux: Blomkest. I'm sorry, I don't know where I got Lindstrom.

Nelson: That's 14 miles south of Wilmar. In Kandiyohi County.

LeDoux: How long were you at that church?

Nelson: A little over four years. After that we moved up to Karlsted, Minnesota, the Red River Valley. We stayed there 6 ½ years, and had a wonderful ministry, both places but an extension ministry up there over a wide area and a lot of interested experiences. Then we came down to Isanti, South Isanti Church?

LeDoux: This was in what year you came to South Isanti?

Nelson: 1937, was the 5th of November. The first of December, we stayed there till March 1943. Then I went, we went to Kewanee, Illinois, to set up a church.

LeDoux: How is that spelled?

Nelson: K-E-W-A-N-E-E. Had to stop to think. Well, that was in '43. In the fall I volunteered as a chaplain for World War II, then went to Harvard University on November 5th to chaplain school. From, there I was sent over to San Francisco. What's the name of that army place over there? I saw it in the paper just the other day. They're closing it now. Well, that's where I went. From there I was told to join an outfit, the 55th General Hospital, it's stationed at St. Joseph Camp, Joseph T. Robinson, I think it was called in Arkansas. They were getting ready to go overseas and I was filling in with them. We left there the last part of February. We left Boston, I think it was around February 28 of '44 and headed, I was told, the largest convoy that ever went across the ocean. And we landed in Lasco, Scotland and moved to Flander Norrad, Wales to wait until our hospital grounds were ready. Then we moved up to Great Malvern, England.

LeDoux: Just checking the tape here.

Nelson: There's a hospital just 50-50 hospital we were stationed and I was senior chaplain in the outfit. Had a wonderful experience. Our hospital was one of 19 hospitals. Sometimes we had over 1700 patients. Before the patients came we saw the troops come out from everywhere, moving down to the sea shore to go across for the invasion. Then in the 22 of June, 1945 we were transferred over to (indiscernible), along France, a few miles away from Elyss. Stationed there for a while. Then the redeployment came. We were to be redeployed for the Far East. But the Japanese gave up before then. We were dissolved and shipped home to U.S. soil. I was mustered out on 2nd of December 1945 from Camp La Croix. I came home to the family then and rested a while. Then I went back to church in Kewanee, Illinois. They had written to me in France and wanted me to come back. Then I stayed there until September 1947. Then by the request of the Conference Board here in Minnesota, we were asked to go up to her home

community to take charge of the church and especially to help them build a parsonage. The young preacher ahead of me had made a fire too hot so the house took fire and burned down.

LeDoux: Now, this was in what town?

Nelson: It was 10 miles east of Barnum, Minnesota.

LeDoux: This is Carlton County?

Nelson: Carlton County. The name of the church and area is called Sandy Lake, country, community. So then I had to set about getting a house, drew the house plan, figured out the type of lumber we wanted and then we got donations to go out in the country and cut timber. So I had to head that up. See to it we got the right sized log for the right type of timber of lumber. I headed that up, skidded it and hauled it in. There was a sawmill there and we sawed it and I had to supervise the sawing so that they sawed the right planks out of the right logs. We had a planer to plane it. Then we headed up the parsonage. So that was quite a job to fill. Then we went back to the church. By 1951, first of June, we moved to Lengby, Minnesota.

LeDoux: Lengby?

Nelson: L-e-n-g-b-y. Seven miles east of Austin, Minnesota, on Highway U.S. 2. That was in '51 and at that time of course, the preachers were not on the social security plan. But I realized that if one was going to be secure for old age I had to go out and earn social security. So in '54 I went out and did other work. Later in '56-'57 I started to sell electric fencing supplies. Started a little wholesale business for myself.

LeDoux: Now at this time you were still in the ministry which –you were talking side jobs also?

Nelson: No, I was not in the ministry but I accepted speaking engagements.

LeDoux: Okay, now, the last time we left off you, I believe, you were working, doing electrical fencing or selling. You said you were no longer with the ministry, now how did that actually come about? Did you actually leave the ministry?

Nelson: (Phone interrupts.)

LeDoux: Okay, now when we left off you were talking about, you were going to clarify for me about this sales work you were doing. Now, had you actually left the ministry or what had happened?

Nelson: Well, I left the ministry to the extent that it was not my main occupation. But I went out to preach and teach whenever I was called upon, so from that way I kept in touch--

LeDoux: The reason for this was what?

Nelson: In order to get in on social security and earn wages enough fortify myself in old age.

LeDoux: Did the church have any sort of plan--

Nelson: We had a-I belonged to a pension but I know that wouldn't by far do. So we moved into Cambridge in 1956 in the fall. We had a few cabins up by Big Sugar Lake by Grand Rapids, Minnesota. We bought some land when I came out of the army in 1946, in the fall. Then we built up few cabins and in '63 we retired up there. So coming back from Chicago then in 1956 I started selling, started out by selling nursery stock, for a while and did quite well on that. As I said before, in the winter I got onto the product of electric fence posts, post, a different area.

LeDoux: What was this nursery stock? This was what?

Nelson: That was through the winter I sold that.

LeDoux: Now, what exactly are you talking about when you say nursery stock?

Nelson: Well, apple trees and landscaping jobs and so on, but then during the winter then I began selling electric fencing supply and sort of started a home sale business of my own, that I took care of myself, and had a truck and kept until 1963, in the spring, when I sold out. By that time, I had 450 accounts in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota. Bought the product right here and had some other products in line with it and did pretty well. So we decided by the time we were 65 we'd retire and in 1963, wife having worked leader of the (?) department store since 1956 in the fall. So we moved up to the lake.

LeDoux: This was in '63?

Nelson: Then we moved home.

LeDoux: Now, okay, I'm a little confused. You said you moved up to the lake in 1963? Is that correct?

Nelson: Yeah.

LeDoux: You'd already owned some land up there?

Nelson: We bought the land in '46 and in '47 we started to build. Then we had a little cabin business there, we took care of.

LeDoux: During the time you were doing the selling, you were living in?

Nelson: Cambridge, then we retired, as I said, in '63. Then we sold the resort in the fall of '65 and went back to Cambridge. And that is where we have been except for that 2 months when we lived in Idaho.

LeDoux: Okay, I'm still just a little bit confused. When you were selling the stuff you lived in Cambridge.

Nelson: Yep.

LeDoux: And then you said you moved back to Cambridge. Now, where were you when you retired?

Nelson: When we retired we moved up to the lake property. We had built a home up there.

LeDoux: Okay, and that was Lake--

Nelson: That was in the first of May 1963.

LeDoux: Yeah, and that was lake, what then?

Nelson: Big Sugar Lake.

LeDoux: Big Sugar Lake, okay.

Nelson: In Itasca County. And then, we sold the summer resort in '65, in the fall and came back to Cambridge. Except for short period we've lived here ever since.

LeDoux: So essentially then, you have not been active, as far as having-being in charge of a parish since 1951?

Nelson: Except for an interim period from the last part of 1966 and up into December of '67 I served one of the former churches while they had no pastor. And then I've been preaching, here and there, ya know. Conducted a lot of funerals in this community the last-since 1975.

LeDoux: So, you still do some preaching?

Nelson: When I'm asked. I do visitation work and visit homes and hospitals, voluntarily without pay. For a while I was the visitation pastor of the First Baptist Church in Cambridge, for about 2 years.

LeDoux: How did you happen to get into the ministry? What influenced you? How did you happen to get into it?

Nelson: Well, like I said, first of all I had a thirst for more knowledge. But when it comes to entering into the ministry, I think that's a calling by itself. Not that you look at it as a job or a profession, though I think it's an inner calling from God. That you feel a call to go. That started back in oh, way back in 1918, 1920, when I was in Youngstown, Ohio. I had the urge to go into the ministry but mainly to go out as a missionary. It might be interesting to know I was drawn to Siberia especially but in the meanwhile, of course, the revolution came and nobody could get in and the missionaries we had up there were pushed out and their property confiscated. So that a- that a-then while I went to school in St. Paul I was a student pastor four summers- three summers in South Dakota and one summer up in Cook, Minnesota. I've served on committees and boards of course, here and there, and Bethel College and Seminary School Board, one or two terms, then the Minnesota Baptist Conference Board for a while. I've had a busy life.

LeDoux: Yeah. Okay, Reverend, I'd like to turn to talking about the South Isanti Church of which you were pastor for a time.

Nelson: As far as churches in Isanti County, it's interesting to note that the first church in the country was a Baptist church organized June 17, 1860.

LeDoux: 1906?

Nelson: '60.

LeDoux: '60?

Nelson: 1860.

LeDoux: Oh, 1860.

Nelson: 1860, I thought you meant-and it's curious to note that down in Chisago Lake or Center City area there was a Baptist church of Swedish people, about 1853-57, something like that and I would-lot of interesting things to say about that. Some of those members drifted this way, intending to go to Princeton to look for new locations. But they liked this particular area so much that they decided to stay here. In 1860, the first Baptist church and the first church in the county by the way, was organized in the home of Olaf Eastlund and then later on the Lutheran Church was organized. But the membership grew and the church also had the mission in the Village of Isanti, sometime they met in the court house and then some other hall. And then the interest grew and the group in the town of Cambridge wanted to organize their own church. And finally that was done in November of 1888.

LeDoux: So essentially there was a group that had come up from--

Nelson: From the old location here.

LeDoux: The first church was the North Church in Cambridge?

Nelson: No, the first church in Isanti County was called the Cambridge Baptist Church to identify itself with the area. But then that church started a mission in town.

LeDoux: In Isanti?

Nelson: And they had meetings and by 1888 the people in the Village of Cambridge wanted to organize their own church, which they did on November 14, 1888. Then the old church said, “Now you take the name the First Baptist Church of Cambridge and we will take the name First Swedish Church of Isanti.” Which they did. Now, would you like the incorporation dates?

LeDoux: If possible. I wanted to make sure I have this straight because in 1860 then, what we have is a group forming in Cambridge.

Nelson: No.

LeDoux: No, See I--

Nelson: Out in the County--

LeDoux: I want to see--

Nelson: --in the location where the North Church is now located.

LeDoux: And that is exactly where? Right outside--

Nelson: Three, four miles out.

LeDoux: That was the North Church. That’s what that was called at the time.

Nelson: No.

LeDoux: No? I still can’t get it right.

Nelson: No. You got that wrong. See, originally it was called the Cambridge Baptist Church to identify itself with the area. But when the church was organized in Cambridge town, then the

mother church said “Now you take the name the First Baptist Church of Cambridge and we will take the name the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti.”

LeDoux: Okay. Fine.

Nelson: Then when that was done, the mother church, now the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti felt that they were too close to Cambridge and the two churches maybe would infringe upon each other, so they looked for another location and bought land from a man by the name Peter Grinlund, which is located 3 miles east of the town of Isanti. Then they, the church located and started to build in the spring of 1890. Much of the work was done to relocate it there by the end of 1890. The church building was dedicated in June 1892.

LeDoux: We’re talking about Isanti right, now?

Nelson: We’re talking about the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti.

LeDoux: Right.

Nelson: They moved from the old location down to what was then called Stornossan (?)

LeDoux: How was that spelled?

Nelson: --and it’s been there ever since. The entire congregation and the pastor Engberg (?) served the congregation until December 31, 1893-1892 it was.

LeDoux: This was, what, this was where.

Nelson: Stornossan is Swede (indiscernible) the Great Meadow, the Great Meadow would be interpreted.

LeDoux: Okay.

Nelson: But it is in Isanti Township.

LeDoux: How is that spelled, do you recall?

Nelson: Hah?

LeDoux: How is that spelled, the Swedish--

Nelson: S-t-o-r-n-o-s-s-a-n. The Great Meadow or Marsh in one way, you can call it. Then in that winter it got to be a difference of opinion, of course. And in April 1893, 71 members withdrew from the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti and went back to the original location, where now the North Church is located. And the old church, the other part of the church stayed in the new location. Then in 1894 I think it was, they-in on September 29, 1894 the North Isanti Church was incorporated, and on May 18, 1896 the south-the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti gave a deed to the North Isanti Baptist Church, deed to the land where upon the old comrade church had stood, as well as to the cemetery. Approximately four acres of land or something like that, maybe a little more. So that was that deal. And the Swedish Baptist church of Isanti was incorporated early in 1888. From there on, because the church has grown on, the North Church has done good work and so has the church which is now officially- is the South Isanti Baptist Church. And in 1894, I think it was, a council was called to decide-on October 13, 1894 a council was held to decide which the historical church was. And at the motion of the North group and seconded by then the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti was designated as the original and historical church of the county. That's just in brief. But both churches have been very active. And the old church, the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti is enlarging, so evidently they are growing.

LeDoux: Now, this North Church is, where about is it exactly located now?

Nelson: You go across the bridge over here and the first, there's a schoolhouse, an old school house on the right side, and then you turn left and go about a three quarter of a mile.

LeDoux: And both these churches had predominantly if not all Swedish members?

Nelson: Yeah, they were all Swedish people. They were immigrants that came over generally.

LeDoux: Okay. Were there other churches in the area in the early times here? Without going into a lot of detail about it.

Nelson: When the preaching stations and like Stansfield came on I don't remember exactly the year, I have the records of all those churches in fact the whole state up to a certain year. The Baptist work has flourished, now the Cambridge Church and the Fish Lake Baptist Church, the Oxford Baptist Church and I think Long Lake originally were daughter churches of the Swedish Baptist Church of Isanti.

LeDoux: Ah, so they kind of moved out from there then.

Nelson: Yeah, preaching stations in groups.

LeDoux: And from the preaching stations they then, they later grew churches. Okay, so.

Nelson: There was a lot of interesting information to be given but if you get permission to microfilm that work and I'll see if I find a full copy of this. Will you be through here again?

LeDoux: Oh yeah, we'll be through here.

Nelson: You can, ah, stop in. I'll tell, I'll tell the board you'd like to borrow it for microfilm and in the interest of the Minnesota Historical Society if you'd like.

LeDoux: Yeah, what changes have you noticed through the years in the church? How, has it changed any, looking back?

Nelson: In what respect?

LeDoux: Oh as far as, I don't know if I should say as far as changes in the way things are presented in the way affairs are, I suppose, carried on.

Nelson: Well, there are certain things that, we do things a little different. The churches have grown bigger and you have to organize to plan to work because as many as possible are involved. Like our church I suppose there's I suppose, close to 600 voting members, and right now I'm chairman of our constitution committee. We are revising the constitution committee, the constitution of the church but just now we're working on the possibility of introducing a one vote system of which would involve more people, in the running of the church affairs and to give a more coordinated, controlled-of the work. In other words, so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. Otherwise, it sometimes-it gets cumbersome and one board decides this without knowledge the other board knowing anything about it. And then of course, even during my ministry, I can go back and see where there were not so many organizations in the church as it is now. And the danger maybe had been sometimes that we over-organized and I don't know if it gets any more effective. But one thing I 'm happy about that a great deal is done for the young people. And now the latter years the senior citizens have gotten more attention- that's okay.

LeDoux: Have the-the Baptist churches around here that was largely Swedish in nature, have there been in recent years a large, larger influx of non- Swedish people into these churches so it's more mixed?

Nelson: Yes. That's very noticeable. Years ago, 30-35 years ago you could walk uptown here and hardly anything was Swedish being talked. Now, one hardly knows anybody on the street. There has been a terrific influx of people from everywhere. Isanti County up to about 1940-42 was the only county that did not have Catholic Church. Well, then they-the Catholics started to move in during the Depression the church acquired farms and transplanted, I suppose, Catholic members who were poor and had no work and so on, to place them. From there on they have prospered quite a bit, in fact now they have started a church in Isanti. I believe somebody said, I forget how many families were--

Mrs. Nelson: Well, they took almost half of the membership here.

Nelson: --about 1500.

Mrs. Nelson: Almost half of the membership here had to go over there.

Nelson: They divided it up into two parishes.

Mrs. Nelson: It wasn't as they wanted to but it was done as a church--

Nelson: But the churches get along fine. They cooperate. Through the years they've had Easter services together and other doings together. It's a quiet, peaceful community to live in. And a lot of people retire here, come from the Twin Cities and other places to retire. They take in this, count here on this particular street is only senior citizens. Now they're going to open the other side of the street for that. We're happy in the community but the population has changed. And

we see that in the churches. You take in our church now, we've been here since 1956. Well, I don't think I know half of the people by name now. They come and go. People are transferred from one job to another. From one place to another. They come and go. But I that's the experience of all the churches in the area. But it's a community that is expanding. When we first came here in '37 it was only a gravel road into Minneapolis, here. And very few settlements. Now, pretty soon it's going to be all one city.

LeDoux: I didn't ask you. Do you have any children?

Nelson: We have three children. One, the oldest daughter lives in New Brighton, her husband is a field superintendent for a construction firm. Our son who went through the Korean War took a forestry course at the University of Minnesota and has been a forester now since about 1959-60, some place in there.

LeDoux: Okay. I believe you were talking a little bit about your children. You mentioned your son had taken a forestry course.

Nelson: Our son Charles was a forest ranger in Grangeville, Idaho right now. He was drafted as an assistant coordinator in the building of Libby(?) Dam, some years ago. Spent four years there then he asked for his own district again. Went to Elk City, one of the last gold rush in the olden days west. Very interesting community, interesting people. Then the government drafted him to come into Grainsville, about three years ago, to work in the land use department. He has like three different departments under him, ecological involvement, a, I don't remember the names of the departments. But he's still out there, he's very busy. Last year especially. He didn't get any vacation because they were considering what to do with some of the wilderness area and that

took a lot of time to get all those reports which you must write and send in to the Congress. And this spring he got a certificate of merit from the forestry-a cash award for his work last year.

LeDoux: And then you have one other child?

Nelson: And then we have our younger daughter who is married to a forest ranger in Kooskis(?), along the Louie(?) Clark Highway, number 12.

LeDoux: This is what state now?

Nelson: In Idaho.

LeDoux: Idaho.

Nelson: They're busy over there. He is interested in writing for the forestry. Serves on a number of national committees.

LeDoux: Okay. I had just one other question I could think of. What did you first, what were your first thoughts when you came to the country? What did you think of this new country?

Nelson: What I thought of it?

LeDoux: Yes. What were your impressions?

Nelson: Well, of course anyone coming from another country is impressed by the magnitude of the country. The great expanse, travelling around, because I have moved about a little bit here and there and I've enjoyed it. And of course you come from a small country and at that time Sweden was not developed as it is now. Now Sweden is a highly developed, to the extent that they have not had people enough, for their work force and for the economy. So through the years they have imported thousands upon thousands of other nationalities, Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs,

Germans, and any number Finlands, Estonians, a lot of Estonians, and Latvians fled over to Sweden when the Second World War came out on the Russians (indiscernible). And they've been good tradesmen, many of them. Some have, some nationalities haven't done so well I understand. But one interesting thing over there right now is, that the Swedish government insists upon that these people come from other countries must learn their own language first, in order to be able to learn Swedish. That's a new twist. So they try to make it easier for the foreigners to be able to understand grammar and so on in Swedish. I think it's pretty good for the _____. Of course now Sweden has a terrific pension system, Medicare system and you never hear any complaints of the people over there. To be sure, the taxes are high, but then they're getting something for the taxes. Now if you're over there, if you were to have major surgery here, it would pay you to go over to Sweden and have it there and have money left over. If you start to work you pay approximately 3% into the Medicare and social security fund, there what we call it. And that takes care of you and your family. If you have to go to a hospital it doesn't cost you anything. Like the surgery doesn't cost you anything. If you go to a clinic or a doctor and have to have medicine you put your bill into medicare and you get three-fourths of the money back. Here, me had a pacemaker put in a month or so ago. And the bill was close to \$5000. Well, it's a difference in systems.

LeDoux: Yeah. Well, is there anything else that I haven't asked you about that you want to say in this interview at all? Anything that I haven't touched on that you want to say?

Nelson: Well, I can't think of anything now. Maybe by the time that you come back.

LeDoux: Okay. That concludes this interview.